

RECEIVED

550468

SEP 14 2001

Dear President George W. Bush:

I am a student in Nevada and environmental issues have always concerned me. The preservation of the environment has been one of my primary interests and I have grown disappointed seeing environmental issues take a backseat to Social Security, healthcare, and various other items covered on political platforms. The environment truly is the one item that affects everybody, and it is because of this I am writing this letter.

It has come to my attention recently that there has been a proposed solution to theoretical problems that might be encountered in the Yucca Mountain nuclear depository. The EPA has proposed adding a part 197 to Subchapter F of Chapter I, title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Among these proposed regulations is a suggestion that the amount of radiation a human would be allowed to absorb per year would summate to .015 roentgen equivalents for man (15mrems). Not only is this proposed amount still dangerous to human life, but would also be insufficient to prevent against possible cancer development and even fatality.

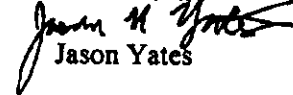
According to Dr. John Gofman of U.C. Berkley, an expert in the field of radiation, the increase of 15mrems per year, would be sufficient enough to cause fatality in one out of two thousand exposed or within the vicinity of "rad-waste." Not only is the disposal of rad-waste unsafe but also morally unsound. By disposing of materials that our lifetime created, we leave the problem for future generations to take care of, which is simply not right. According to the YMS committee rad-waste could pose a danger for upwards of tens to hundreds of thousands of years. Recorded history for humans is not even a fraction of that number, and creating a disaster that would pose a threat for that long is simply unfathomable.

Nevada is one of the fastest growing states in the nation and no matter how far away from civilization the rad-waste is placed it will still pose a threat. Simply preparing the rad-waste for transportation exposes the workers to 10-30rems, which is enough to drastically decrease sperm production in males and cause drastic changes to the structure of blood cells, a potentially fatal occurrence. Simply placing restrictions may help the problem, but it will never solve it. Setting aside the problems of today will only cause exponentially great problems for future generations.

The development of means to recycle rad-waste has been used for years in Europe by converting unstable Uranium to Plutonium, a much less radioactive material. Despite it being more expensive than simply burying the problem and trying to forget about it, it is a necessity and something America will inevitably turn to as the piles of rad-waste build up. The sensible solution is to **start recycling now**. Even though the initial cost is greater, it will save numerous lives and prevent large outbreaks of cancer spurred by radiation. You cannot and should not place a price on a human life; they are priceless.

The necessity to protect our environment has been realized in Congress in the past few decades with the enactment of the Clean Air and Water Acts. These acts have no way to protect against widespread groundwater contamination from rad-waste and the continued use of a power source that has no safe way to dispose of the nuclear fuel waste produced is an atrocity. Action must be taken to enact legislation that will prevent the furthering of unsafe disposal practices until we find a cleaner source of power.

A concerned student


Jason Yates